

human rights, Dr. Silva Gaul was arrested by the dictatorship on March 18, 2003. This heinous arrest was a part of the regime's March 2003, deplorable, island-wide crackdown on peaceful pro-democracy activists. In a sham trial, Dr. Silva Gaul was sentenced to 10 years in the totalitarian gulag.

According to cubapp.info, while imprisoned in a repugnant dungeon Dr. Silva Gaul declared a hunger strike to protest the inhuman treatment of political prisoners in Castro's gulag. It has also been reported that Dr. Silva Gaul has been transferred to a maximum security section where the conditions are even harsher.

Dr. Silva Gaul, despite being imprisoned, despite facing even more severe maltreatment in the inhuman gulag, continues to advocate for liberty. Dr. Silva Gaul is a brilliant example of the heroism of the Cuban people. No matter how intense the repression, no matter how horrifically brutal the consequences of a dignified struggle for liberty, the totalitarian gulags are full of men and women of all backgrounds and ages who represent the best of the Cuban nation.

Mr. Speaker, we must speak out and act against this abominable disregard for human rights, human dignity, and human freedom just 90 miles from our shore. My Colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Ricardo Silva Gaul and every political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

#### RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SAUL RAMIREZ

##### HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 5, 2005*

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Saul Ramirez for his commitment to serving the citizens of Laredo, Texas.

Saul Ramirez began his career as a Laredo City Council Member in 1982. He has held a number of positions in local government, and his contributions to town and country have helped transform Laredo into an international center of commerce.

As the Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development, he handled major federal neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and homelessness programs within the Department of Housing and Urban Development. As Assistant Secretary he oversaw rehabilitation programs such as Community Block Grant, Hope for Ownership of Single Family Homes, Home Investment Partnership, and various other programs that establish funding for housing and support services.

Among other accomplishments in his distinguished career, Mr. Ramirez created the Laredo Affordable Housing Finance Corporation in 1990. He has worked hard to help some of Laredo's poorest neighborhoods. Working to improve housing in the Laredo community, Saul Ramirez's tireless efforts ensure that our citizens have a decent place to live.

A former mayor of Laredo, Mr. Ramirez is no stranger to the unique needs of his community. Serving at a time of great community growth, he has helped to provide guidance and leadership for our changing city.

Saul Ramirez is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including Newsweek Mag-

azine's "25 Most Dynamic Mayors" in 1996. He has served as Director of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, as a Board Member of the U.S. Council of Mayors, and with the Texas Municipal League.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have this opportunity to recognize the important contributions of Saul Ramirez. His hard work and community dedication have helped to transform Laredo into the city it is today.

#### HONORING NEAL MCBRIDE

##### HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 5, 2005*

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Neal McBride for being recognized as 2005 Citizen of the Year by the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations. This special honor is truly well-deserved.

Mr. McBride has been an active member of the community within the South County region since the late 1980's. He has served as the chair or coordinator for numerous civic groups including the South Run Coalition, South County Schools Alliance, the Laurel Hill Development and Arts Center and the Cold War Museum. In addition, McBride has also served as an officer with the Federation of Lorton Communities and Newington Forest Community Association. He is director-at-large of the Occoquan Watershed Coalition, a member of the Lorton Heritage Society, a Lorton Arts Foundation Advisory panelist and a member of the Laurel Hill Planning Task Force.

In 2003, Mr. McBride was honored by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors with the title of "Lord Fairfax." Mr. McBride, a retired health care management specialist with the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, has lived in South Springfield since 1981.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to express my gratitude to Neal McBride for all of his efforts on behalf of the Mount Vernon area. He has served his community well, truly meriting recognition. I call upon my colleagues to join me in applauding Mr. McBride's past accomplishments and in wishing him the best of luck in all future endeavors.

#### HONORING LANCE CORPORAL NICHOLAS DAVID LARSON

##### HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 5, 2005*

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Marine Lance Corporal Nicholas David Larson of Wheaton, Illinois. Corporal Larson was killed on November 9, 2004 when his unit took fire from terrorists in the Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Nick was killed in the ensuing firefight. He had been serving in Iraq since mid June 2004 and his tour was set to end in January 2005.

Lance Corporal Larson was 14 years old when he did more than 100 push-ups for a recruiter. Nicholas told his mother after 9/11 that he joined the Marines because "I just want to make a difference."

He began his service after graduating from Wheaton North High School in 2003. He was assigned to Company L, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA. Corporal Larson followed in the footsteps of his father, who served in the Navy.

Teachers and administrators at Wheaton North High School described Nicholas as quiet and focused and an intense student. And always knowing he wanted to be a Marine.

Lance Corporal Larson was a young man of only 19 when he made the ultimate sacrifice in service to his country. Our deepest sympathies to his beloved family: David and Anne Larson, and his sister Katie Larson. The entire community joins in mourning Nicholas's loss.

We honor the memory of Lance Corporal Nicholas David Larson and the dedication and bravery with which he served our nation and the people of Iraq.

#### IN HONOR OF MR. BENJAMIN DE LA SELVA

##### HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 5, 2005*

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Benjamin "Ben" De La Selva. Ben was born in Somoto, Nicaragua, in 1939. He immigrated to the United States in 1961, subsequently serving in the U.S. Army for six and a half years. In the mid 1960s he studied French and Polish at the Defense Language Institute, DLI, and then served a year in Vietnam (1966-67) with the 173rd Airborne as Prisoner of War interrogator and French linguist. Ben was in Dakto, Central Highlands, at the onset of one of the Vietnam War's bloodiest battles. After leaving the military and getting a college education through the GI Bill, Ben was hired at DLI, where he occupied numerous positions from 1972 to 2005.

During his rise from teacher to dean at DLI, Ben trained thousands of military linguists, guided several generations of language teachers, and mentored many supervisors and managers who now occupy leadership positions. Moreover, he supervised every DLI language program and participated in the development of much needed Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Arabic curricula. During the last 20 consecutive years, Ben served as dean of every DLI resident school, a credit to his solid leadership qualities. As a dean, he participated in several pioneering initiatives including Team Teaching, the Faculty Personnel System, and the introduction of up-to-date teaching methods. Likewise, Ben was at the forefront of DLI's giant leap to modern-day technology. Ben retired on January 3rd, 2005, but is still associated with the U.S. government in his capacity as President of the DLI Alumni Association, a non-profit organization he founded in November 2001.

Mr. Speaker, Ben is an excellent example of the immigrant young man who arrives in the USA with a high school diploma, serves in the military, gets an education through the GI Bill, pursues and flourishes in a governmental career, and 40 years later retires with an impeccable and distinguished record. Ben truly believes he has achieved the American dream. He exemplifies the highest aspirations of this nation. I am proud to honor him today.